

REMARKS

This Amendment is filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) and in response to the Final Official Action dated February 28, 2008.

Claims 1, 2, 5-10 and 14-27 are pending in the application (claims 3-4 and 11-13 having been previously cancelled). Claims 1 and 5 are amended, and claims 15-18 and 22-25 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, herein.

Claims 1 and 5 are independent.

Claims 1, 2, and 5-10 now stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over previously cited (and previously applied in an earlier Official Actions dated 3/13/07 and 10/3/06) Nishikawa (JP Publication No. 2000-300729) in view of newly cited and applied Yamaguchi et al. (JP Publication No. 2001-062032) and Ishtda (JP Publication No. 09-253271). Claims 14-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over the base combination in further view of Official Notice.

Independent claims 1 and 5 are amended to further require that each of the plurality of illumination devices is disposed to illuminate a respective one of the displayed symbols, and includes a back lamp and a lamp housing containing the back lamp. Substantially corresponding features were previously recited in dependencies (now cancelled) of each of claims 1 and 5.

Thus, what claim 1 and claim 5 require is a plurality of illumination devices, each of which (i) includes a back lamp contained in a lamp housing provided at the back of a variable display device, and (ii) is disposed to illuminate a respective one of the displayed symbols of a variable display device.

The final office action contends that Nishikawa discloses the present invention substantially as claimed including the structurally relevant elements, with the exception of a plurality of illumination devices, each of which illuminates the variable display device and is provided at the back of the variable display device and an illumination control device for controlling each of the plurality of illumination devices.

Additionally, the final office action asserts that Yamaguchi explicitly discloses illumination devices used for illuminating a variable display device, each of which is disposed at the back of the variable display device.

Furthermore, the final office action asserts that Ishida discloses that it is known to stop multiple spinning reels in accordance with a randomly selected stop order table, without shielding the reels that are not to be stopped but with an implicit guard against a player being able to select those reels.

However, in the illumination devices disclosed in Yamaguchi, two light-emitting diodes (LEDs) of each of three colors (red, green, and blue), are provided inside of a single lamp housing. Light from the LEDs is combined in order to emit a light in one of various colors (see paragraphs 15, 18, 23, and 27-29). This emitted light is directed towards the entire panel to illuminate all the symbols printed on the reels. Accordingly, the illumination devices disclosed in Yamaguchi are incapable of illuminating individual symbols printed on the reels respectively. That is Yamaguchi, and hence the applied combination, lacks any suggestion of a structure capable of illuminating a respective one of the displayed symbols of the variable display device with a respective one of a plurality of illumination devices.

Indeed, this is obvious from Yamaguchi's own disclosure, because according to Yamaguchi's own teaching, unlike that of the present application, the number of LEDs does not correspond to that of symbols printed on the reels, and location of the LEDs does not correspond to that of symbols printed on the reels. Accordingly, the illumination devices disclosed in Yamaguchi are incapable of illuminating symbols printed on the reels respectively.

In addition, the present application has a configuration in which light emitted from each of lamp is not interfered with by light emitted from another lamp. Each lamp is in a separate housing. On the other hand, Yamaguchi explicitly teaches a single housing 33 for all the LEDs, not separate housings for each of lamps (see Figure 3). Yamaguchi has no need to concern himself with light interference, because it is a principle of Yamaguchi's operations that light from different LEDs be combined to create a desired colored light that is emitted toward the entire panel to illuminate symbols printed on the reels.

Indeed, modifying Yamaguchi to include a separate housing for each LED would violate a principle of operation of Yamaguchi, because Yamaguchi requires that light

from the different LEDs be combined to meet its objectives and separate housings could interfere with the combining of the light from different LEDs.

Furthermore, as noted above, Yamaguchi discloses that the illumination devices emit combined light from the LEDs toward the entire liquid crystal panel to illuminate symbols printed on the reels. According to display principles of a liquid crystal panel, viewable angles are different from color to color, depending on the wavelength-dependent refractive index of the liquid crystal panel. Thus, bright colors may hardly be seen depending on viewable angles to the liquid crystal panel.

However, according to the present invention, symbols are printed on the reels with a light transmitting ink and a light shielding ink, whereby symbols printed on the reels are clearly viewed by only lighting-up the back lamps installed to correspond to symbols respectively.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention, as claimed, patentably distinguishes over the applied prior art, because the combination of Nishikawa, Yamaguchi, and Ishida not only lacks any suggestion of such structural limitations as a separate housing for each lamp and an individual illumination device disposed to illuminate one respective displayed symbol, but also because it is incapability of illuminating each of symbols printed on the reels, and cannot prevent light emitted from respective lamps from interfering with each other (to do so would violate a principle of operation of Yamaguchi). Still further the combination cannot cause bright colors displayed on the panel to be clearly viewable due to the viewable angles.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is courteously solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the below listed local telephone number, in order to expedite resolution of any remaining issues and further to expedite passage of the application to issue, if any further comments, questions or suggestions arise in connection with the application.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135

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(Case No.1227.43065X00) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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